

<b>TO:</b>	<b>CHAIR AND MEMBERS STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING ON FEB 10, 2014</b>
<b>FROM:</b>	<b>LARRY PALARCHIO DIRECTOR, FINANCIAL PLANNING AND POLICY</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>2014 BUDGET – PUBLIC INPUT</b>

<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
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That, on the recommendation of the Director, Financial Planning and Policy, this report **BE RECEIVED** for information.

<b>BACKGROUND</b>
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This report captures public input regarding the 2014 Budget from December 3, 2013 to February 3, 2014. This includes feedback received at the ‘Build a Budget’ Workshops (held on January 11 and January 15, 2014), e-mails sent to [budget@london.ca](mailto:budget@london.ca), phone calls made to at 519-661-4638, tweets to @CityofLdnOnt or #ldnbudget14, and Facebook posts on the City of London Facebook page.

**‘Build a Budget’ Workshops (January 11<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, 2014)**

For several years, the primary community engagement activity undertaken by the City of London was a community outreach program where members of Council and Civic Administration attended various shopping malls throughout the city to hear public input and answer questions regarding the Budget. Although this community outreach program was used in the past, community engagement needs and expectations have changed. As a result, Civic Administration replaced the shopping mall consultations, for a second year in a row, with two 2-hour “Build a Budget Workshops”.

The idea of the “Build a Budget Workshop” was to invite Londoners to explore the 2014 Budget in an environment where they could not only learn the information they need and want to know about the Budget, but where they could have the opportunity to ask questions and provide thoughtful and meaningful input. The Workshop setting also provided a unique environment for bringing community members together for multi-party discussions and mutual education (two-way consultative sessions).

In total, 110 members of the community attended the “Build a Budget Workshops” (65 at the January 11<sup>th</sup> session; 45 at the January 15<sup>th</sup> session), as well as members of Council, the Senior Leadership Team and other City staff.

Feedback regarding the Workshops was extremely positive. With 97% of respondents stating they agreed this was an opportunity to learn and provide meaningful feedback and 100% of respondents stating they were satisfied with venue and location. Examples of comments included:

“Build-a-Budget is a fantastic way for citizens to learn and engage with the Budget.”

“Take Build-a-Budget sessions to local London schools so that London’s young people grow up understanding the decisions that go into creating a budget.”

“Thank you so much! I hope you will keep doing these. Get more people to attend.”

Public input gathered at the Workshops is **attached** as **Appendix A** and is grouped by station.

**Other Feedback (December 3, 2013 – February 3, 2014)**

As noted above, Civic Administration has been capturing feedback and comments related to the 2014 Budget through a variety of channels. E-mail inquiries and input were received through [budget@london.ca](mailto:budget@london.ca) on the City's website and social media input was collected through Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/LondonCanada> and Twitter at @CityofLdnOnt or #LdnBudget13. Financial Planning & Policy has also been collecting feedback received by phone at (519) 661-4638.

**Appendix B (attached)** captures feedback received through these channels. Additionally, one letter was received and is **attached** as **Appendix C**.

A further report pertaining to public input captured from [www.buildabudget.ca](http://www.buildabudget.ca) will be provided as the data is made available.

<b>Prepared By:</b>	<b>Recommended By:</b>
<b>Jon-Paul McGonigle Business Planning Process Manager</b>	<b>Larry Palarchio Director – Financial Planning and Policy</b>

# APPENDIX A

**FEEDBACK CAPTURED AT 'BUILD A BUDGET' WORKSHOPS (January 11<sup>th</sup> and Jan 15th, 2014)**

## **Comment Corner**

*Designated space where people could write down their thoughts about the budget and post them.*

- Police and firemen: what about giving tax credit on property taxes in lieu of retention pay?
- Update the development charges to reflect true costs.
- Leave garbage as is; use extra money for landfill acquisition. Spend more on maintenance – less on reconstruction.
- Need to consider the long term implications of infrastructure defects. We will pay more in future if we don't fix now.
- Students need the transit system of the future. Higher service level will show students the quality of living in London. It should be priority #1.
- Need to move towards multiyear budgets. Keep doing Build-a-Budget.
- I want a full time council and fixed terms!
- If we want to keep students in London, quality of live issues must be priority – walkable ....., transit, bike paths.
- What is the point of making and approving master plans if not to do it?
- Rebalance the multiunit residential tax rates to 1.5 from 2.
- It would be great to see these impact 25th percentile, 50th percentile and 75th percentile homes and multi-residential units.
- When streets are rebuilt (like Horton east of Wellington), why are bike lanes not incorporated? On Horton, instead of island in the centre of the road, a separated bike lane would have been a better, safer idea...a missed opportunity!
- Make London a 'Complete Streets' City
- Do not cut the Bike Lane Program.
- I think the City should assess the possibility of privatizing garbage collection.
- The City should reduce commercial and industrial tax rate to spur economic growth.
- Let's simplify information so it is accessible to everyone. Average citizens do not want to read jargon(s). Keep the message honest and simple.
- Do not eliminate the bike lane budget.
- (Put) water and wastewater in this budget. You cannot build a new house unless you can flush the toilet. Library budget - they are so much more than just books.

### **Priority Pole**

*Participants were provided with stickers in their participant packages and used stickers to identify priority of emerging issues, strategic investments and municipal granting as presented in the 2014 budget document*

**Question: Do you agree with the proposed cuts already included in the 3.1% submitted budget? (Business Cases 1-13)**

Bus Case	Business case description (000')	YES	NO
1	Elimination of all direct City funding to the Downtown London Business Improvement Area resulting in a reduction to the property tax levy of \$53 <b>BE APPROVED.</b>	6	20
2	A \$1,000 elimination to be planned increased contribution to be Economic Development Reserve Fund <b>BE APPROVED.</b>	5	14
3	A reduction to the contribution to the Sanitary Landfill Reserve Fund of \$255 as a result of less business garbage going to the landfill <b>BE APPROVED.</b>	7	11
4	Reduction to be Upper Thames River Conservation Authority contract related to the management of the City's environmentally significant areas of \$72 <b>BE APPROVED.</b>	5	28
5	The addition of a Curator devoted to conserving, researching, interpreting, promoting and exhibiting its unique Harris family collection for Eldon House resulting in a \$59 tax levy increase from rates <b>BE REVIEWED.</b>	13	9

Bus Case #	Project #	Project Description	YES	NO
6	SW6030	Landfill Site Property Acquisition	5	5
7	MU1044-14	Bus Purchase Renewal	3	23
8	TS1446-14	Arterial Road Rehabilitation - Main	4	7
9	RC2608	Glen Cairn Major Upgrades	1	6
10	PP2014	Floodplain Acquisition	4	23
11	TS4207	Downtown on-street Pay & Display Parking	4	6
12	TS1739-14	Bike lane Program	0	86
13	TS6217	Facility Energy Management	2	17

**Question: Would you support an additional 1% tax levy increase from rates in the 2014 Budget to begin accumulating funding for the following Strategic Investments and emerging issues?**



**Question: Which of the below strategic investments are most important to you? (Business Cases 41-49)**

Bus Case #	Initiative	Vote
41	Transportation Master Plan - Lifecycle Infrastructure Gap	16
42	Transportation Master Plan - Growth Infrastructure Gap	12
43	Bus Rapid Transit	41
44	Downtown Master Plan	34
45	Economic Development Initiatives (Business Cases #45 - #48)	2
	<i>Industrial Land Development Strategy</i>	
46	<i>Medical Innovation and Commercialization Network</i>	8
47	<i>Performing Arts Centre (incl. related development)</i>	14
48	<i>Hydro Lands (Kilmer Brownfield)</i>	9
49	Ontario Works Decentralization Strategy	9

**Question: Which of the below emerging issues are most important to you? (Business Cases 50-57)**

Bus Case #	Initiative	Vote
50	Blackfriars Bridge	18
51	Huron Street Improvement	6
52	Safety Issues for Railway Pedestrian Crossing	8
53	Veterans Memorial Parkway Noise Wall	5
54	Traffic Calming Program	11
55	Sidewalk Maintenance Program	21
56	Emerald Ash Borer	30
57	Cultural Prosperity Plan	14

**Question: Which of the below municipal granting opportunities are most important to you? (Business Case 58)**

Organization	Description of Funding Request	Votes
African Community Council (ACC)	Annual funding to assist African newcomers and immigrants to gain employment.	2
Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)	One time funding to support a volunteer coordinator two days/week to support three, 8 week Peer Support Programs for up to 30 seniors annually.	5
Family Services Thames Valley	Annual funding to provide an on-site counsellor one day/ week at the South London Neighbourhood Resource Centre.	11
Grand Theatre	One time funding to assist in obtaining matching funds as required under the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund or the revitalization of the theatre with capacity and energy efficient investments.	4
JCI London	One time operational funding for a new organization to establish a professional brand that targets young professionals.	7
London Celebrates Canada	Annual funding for four years to hire three people to grow London Celebrates Canada events over the next four years culminating in Canada's sesquicentennial anniversary in 2017.	5
London Children's Museum	One time operational funding request to support the implementation of the Museum's transition and sustainability strategy as they move to a new location in the next couple of years.	12
St. Joseph's Hospice	One time capital funding request over two years to support the construction of a ten bed, 18,000sq. foot, residential hospice, at the Sisters of St. Joseph's Residence at 485 Windermere Road, London.	9

## APPENDIX B

### **OTHER FEEDBACK (December 3, 2013 – February 3, 2014)**

The following captures feedback received via email at [budget@london.ca](mailto:budget@london.ca), telephone at (519) 661-4638, Facebook at [facebook.com/LondonCanada](https://www.facebook.com/LondonCanada), and Twitter @CityofLdnOnt or #LdnBudget14.

My concern is where cuts should possibly be made. I just happened to be listening to a presentation to City Council by "Sunfest" the other day asking for \$50 000 from the City. I have also noticed that this group is made up of various businesses from outside of London, more than businesses that are in London and are London Tax Payers. Though this Event brings in money it also takes out money (business Profits) to other areas of ON other than London and this does not help the individual Tax Payers. Why are we giving money to them as opposed to charging for the benefit of using our City Park as their Cash Cow? Perhaps savings could be made by not giving away Tax Payers Money to such organizations. If they can't support themselves then just perhaps they aren't a need of the Citizens of London. ie: Orchestra London, and Performing Arts Centre etc. Another example is Police Services asking for a 3%+ increase every year with the threat of layoffs of employees threatening London Citizens. While the Citizens themselves are being laid off and businesses closing. Perhaps enough is enough! This is only two Senior Citizens feelings about where to save money it does not need a public presentation in front of City Council, but it does need Council to look in all directions for Savings. The taxes we pay right now are over \$4 200/year. Not an easy thing to handle with utility rates continually increasing along with CEO benefits and wages. A 0% Tax Increase would be very nice, but...is it realistic for the whole term of Joe Fontana, I don't know. Joe has been a good mayor, a little shady perhaps, but his heart is in the right place, and I thank him for that!  
**(via email)**

My view is invest in infrastructure, and that no city money be spent on a another arts centre, the Budweiser gardens is doing well in that area and has started to earn money for the city and does not need any competition from an art centre that would need subsidising every year. **(via email)**

I write about the inclusion of e-governance and its input into the City's budget process. E-governance has been an item addressed in past discussions when new governance protocols were reviewed just before this current Council. It was stated at the time that the City would begin a process towards recognizing this form of communication, with its potential incorporation at a future date. It is now several years since this issue was raised and discussed publicly; and yet, there is no evidence of its incorporation for the public to use such a facility. Accordingly, I write to remind the City that this idea was going to be examined and potentially incorporated into the budget process, and ask if this can still be retained on the agenda when the City budget is being reviewed.

The issue of e-governance is not new and, in fact, it is quite established as a means of co-working with the public in many foreign jurisdictions. This note asks that a portion of monies be set aside to ensure that this item (e-governance) is investigated for public involvement in city affairs. City budgets are often included in such endeavours, thus can some monies be considered for investigations that can then be presented to the public during this year of 2014.  
**(via email)**

Budget Cut to Caring for Environmentally Sensitive Areas - I ask that this \$72K cut be rethought. With the need to protect and enhance these areas such a cut seems out of step. **(via email)**

As a walker and hiker, I am disappointed to hear that the City budget is cutting monies spent on the outdoor ESA areas etc. We have introduced 30 - 50 people each week to the wonderful trails in the city of London and am looking forward to the new trails in the Coves. **(via email)**

At this time in history, with all we know about the degradation of the natural environment, why

would this area be chosen for cuts? The city govt. is constantly dreaming up ways to make London more attractive, etc., but without our natural environment preserved it will be too late at some point to redeem these features. **(via email)**

Please do not cut \$72,000 from your proposed budget for the eradication or control of invasive species in ESA's. What you might save this year will cost far more to deal with in future years. We need our natural areas and we need them maintained. **(via email)**

The current level of funding for the maintenance of Environmentally Significant Areas is already insufficient for proper maintenance and monitoring. The proposed reduction will likely undoubtedly have a detrimental impact and on the protection of these important areas from both inappropriate human activities and dangerously invasive species. Acquisition and protection of what is left of London's significant natural areas should be a higher priority in this budget. **(via email)**

For heaven's sake don't allow a cut to the maintenance of ESAs! It would be so short sighted and cause such havoc! **(via email)**

Protect the coves- that's it! **(via email)**

This budget is out of control and soon to be unsustainable if not checked. Every public service group has experienced pay freezes or minimum increases and yet this group, police and fire, not only get everything they want in the budget they get the increases in pay they want through binding arbitration. They cannot have the best of both worlds. Do they want 3.2 % in regular budget and in turn will agree to freeze wages for the term of the next contract or will they make due with what they have for regular budget and take their chances with arbitration. It is ridiculous. This police budget has been accomplished with transfers from reserves and other monies. What is going to happen next year when these transfers are not available? Brad Duncan states there will be layoffs if he does it get what he needs. Why is he currently hiring police officers? This man will not lay anyone off but he will cut the services most needed by the citizens of London to prove his point. I am surprised that he has not stated that robberies will not be responded to if he does not get what he wants. He states in his address to council that his comments are not fear mongering but that is exactly what it is. Duncan needs to step down as he is no longer responsible to the citizens of London. I hope that councillors stand up to him again instead of worrying about election. **(via email)**

I just heard of the proposed cuts to this year's budget of \$72 000 for the maintenance of Environmentally Significant Areas. There is never a time to cut money the work being done for our environment. This will have a drastic impact on the efforts and inroads being made to thwart the encroachment of invasive species that threaten to overtake our fragile environment. This will have a drastic impact on the ability to monitor and prevent inappropriate activities in our ESAs. The City of London needs to stay the course to focus on our environment for the benefit of all. We must not decide to follow Prime Minister Stephen Harper's egregious assaults on Canada's environmental protection and advancement of science. For the benefit of our beautiful city and the health of our environment, please ensure that these cuts are not made. **(via email)**

Surely you can find other areas to cut. Today's trend indicates we do not get enough exercise. By cutting the budget for ESA you are re-enforcing this message. Leave the beautify ESA's alone and let them be maintained in a manner that all London taxpayers can enjoy! **(via email)**

How can this be? Come again? There will be "a reduction of \$72000 in the City Budget for the maintenance of Environmentally Significant Areas" ??????????????

I sincerely hope you are just 'testing the waters' and that this ludicrous proposal will be rescinded!

London needs its Environmentally Significant Areas!!!

Do what is right. **(via email)**

I've just heard that London City Council plans to cut \$72000 from the City Budget for the maintenance of Environmentally Significant Areas. I can't believe it! No, that's not right. I can believe it, given the sad history of London City Council's neglect of its natural areas. Developers seem to rule this city, and if they don't care about trees, the protection of native species, and the protection of our water, then apparently our own elected officials are willing to go along with them.



I'm sure there was a time when London was quite a beautiful city, with a forest canopy that earned it its name "the forest city." But clearly that no longer exists and that name is used only to mock this city.

C'mon, you people. Protect our Environmentally Significant Areas. Don't cut that money. **(via email)**

I understand there is a reduction of \$72000 in the City Budget for the maintenance of Environmentally Significant Areas. I'm concerned this will impact initiatives like reducing invasive species management and monitoring inappropriate activities. Here in London we are so fortunate to have these ESA jewels that provide relief from the concrete jungle and enhance our image as the Forest City. I urge you to reconsider this decision, so the ESAs can continue to be thrive and be treasured for generations to come. **(via email)**

Is London, "The Forest City" which drew me to come live here, not worth saving? I find it very short-sighted to cut the maintenance budget of the Environmentally Significant Areas by \$72,000, communicating that city council regards these areas as Environmentally Insignificant. By slacking in maintenance for 1 or 2 years, for the sake of keeping a tax increase to \$0 to save the reputation of a mayor bent on prioritizing HIS goal, our Significant plant life and water ways are being compromised and will need more money than ever down the road to fix the mess that will have resulted simply from negligence/short-sightedness. **(via email)**

I do not support cutting what is already a tiny part of the budget that helps the community protect the last wild life areas (aka - ESA.s] of our city. And, I will work against the cuts in any way I can **(via email)**

Concern regarding \$72,000 reduction of ESA in city budget for the maintenance of environmentally significant areas, feels is going to affect the monitoring and reduction of invasive species management and in addition will affect the monitoring of inappropriate activities in these areas. It seems that this reduction contradicts the premise that the city holds inherit value in its treasured ESA's and makes little sense given the fact that money is being poured into improving existing ESA's that have laid dormant for long periods of times example, AH SO gardens property. **(via phone)**

ESA - \$72,000 reduction: They shouldn't be losing that amount of money because it is a great thing they are doing, I know there is inappropriate activities and feel they really need that money, I really want to make sure that the Murray Park remains well maintained. Please do not cut the funding. **(via phone)**

The Council reached a point where they were debating a cost of \$76 per household and I feel it's a waste of time to debate that, people spend money on everything and \$76 I could save staying home from Tim Horton's for a month, they are just trying to look good to be re-elected and wasting hours, staff is exceptionally good and do all this work on budget and then Council goes through the mess and stupidity, there is more disenchantment with this council than I have ever experienced. We are fed up. **(via email)**

Give the Library whatever they want. They do so much good, i.e. help with people finding jobs, research, and children. The have the literacy program, the 1 book, 1 child program, and so much more. The Library does more for the people of London than Council ever does. **(via phone)**

# APPENDIX C

November 23, 2013

Chair and Members  
Planning and Environment Committee  
City of London  
300 Dufferin Avenue  
London, ON N6A 4L9

Dear Chair and Members:

**Re: Contract Renewal for the Management of Environmentally Significant Areas**

I note in the Agenda for the Planning and Environment Committee, in the report of John Fleming, Managing Director of Planning and City Planner, titled "CONTRACT RENEWAL for the MANAGEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTALLY SIGNIFICANT AREAS MEETING ON NOVEMBER 26, 2013", that "in order to meet the proposed 2014 Operating Budget target, the value of the contract in 2014 [between the City and the UTRCA] has been reduced by 15% (\$72,000) to \$408,066."

I also note that, under "ESA MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES and UTRCA "SOLE SOURCE" CONTRACT", the opening sentence states that

"The importance of proactive, on-going management of ESA lands continues to be a priority for the City of London, EEPAC, Nature London and the general public."

As a member of Nature London, I DO NOT SUPPORT ANY REDUCTION in the the current budget of the UTRCA Management Team, and would instead like to see an INCREASE in the budget to allow the hiring of an extra staff person, preferably an Enforcement Officer, to enforce London's Encroachment Program (Return to Nature), which came into effect earlier this year. It has become apparent that the existing team doesn't have sufficient time to enforce this policy adequately, and that the City isn't giving the policy "teeth". If necessary, municipal taxes should be raised to strengthen the Parks By-law in order to cover the cost of effective enforcement. There shouldn't have to be potential cutbacks in budgets for other programs, such as invasive species removal, to deal with anticipated costs to deal with encroachment into ESAs. If the Coves ESA, now the eighth public ESA, is also to be effectively managed by the UTRCA, surely an *increase*, rather than a 15% decrease, in the 2014 budget is called for?

If the City truly considers the importance of proactive on-going management of ESA lands to be a priority, as quoted above, I urge you not to approve a 15% reduction in the budget for the ESA Management Team's activities for 2014, for the sake of the promoting the best possible protection of London's ESAs.

It is unclear if you are being asked to approve the budget at the November 26 meeting, given that the full City budget has yet to be tabled. If the budget is to be considered during the budget debate, I request that this letter also appear on the appropriate agenda at budget time.

Yours truly,

Anita Caveney  
46 Kingspark Crescent  
London, ON N6H 4C4.